

Message Text

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S E C R E T KUALA LUMPUR 4295

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, MY, SN

SUBJ: VISIT OF U.S. TEAM TO DISCUSS COUNTERINSURGENCY EQUIPMENT

REF: STATE 167874 AND PREVIOUS

1. DISCUSSIONS WITH GROUP OF GOM OFFICIALS LED BY MFA SEC GEN ZAITON BEGAN MONDAY MORNING, JULY 21. THE CHARACTER OF THE TALKS WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT THAN ENVISIONED BY WASHINGTON. AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE, GOM DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE A ROLE FOR SINGAPORE IN COMBATTING THE INSURGENCY AND DID NOT MENTION COOPERATION OR COORDINATION WITH SINGAPORE. AS THE TALKS PROGRESSED, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE MALAYSIANS WERE INTERESTED ONLY IN EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING NECESSARY TO OPERATE AND MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT. THEY WERE NOT SEEKING GENERAL COUNTER-INSURGENCY ADVICE OR TRAINING FROM THE U.S. ALTHOUGH THEY DID SOLICIT INDIVIDUAL OPINIONS ON THE CAPABILITIES AND APPROPRIATENESS OF SPECIFIC ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE GOM HAD AN EXAGGERATED IMPRESSION OF OUR ABILITY TO DELIVER MILITARY EQUIPMENT ON SHORT NOTICE, AND OF THE AMOUNT AND RANGE OF MATERIAL THAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE AT EXTREMELY LOW COST AS RESULT OF VIETNAM.

2. AFTER PRELIMINARIES, WHICH INCLUDED BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FMS AND DISCUSSION OF FACTS OF LIFE REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT, GOM PRESENTED U.S. SIDE WITH A LONG AND VERY EXPENSIVE WISH LIST (BUILT ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE U.S. SERVICES HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXCESS EQUIPMENT). BOTH SIDES SOON AGREED THAT THE LIST SHOULD BE PARED DRASTICALLY AND MORE PRECISELY PRIORITIZED.

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WHILE GOM REWORKED ITS PRIORITIES, ADM. CROWE AND COL. HUGO,

ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE AND AIR ATTACHE DAUBS, WENT BY PLANE AND HELICOPTER TO BATTALION HEADQUARTERS AT GERIK NEAR THA BORDER FOR

ON-THE-SPOT BRIEFING BY OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS IN ONE OF THE TWO MOST ACTIVE CT AREAS. TRIP FURNISHED EXCELLENT FIRST HAND VIEW OF SITUATION FACED BY GOM SECURITY FORCES OPERATING IN THESE JUNGLE-COVERED MOUNTAINS. GROUP ALSO HAD LOOK AT EAST-WEST HIGHWAY AND TEMENGGOR DAM, THE TWO MAJOR STATIC TARGETS WHICH NEED TO BE PROTECTED AGAINST TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN THAT AREA.

3. FOLLOWING TWO DAYS WERE DEVOTED TO INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS AND FURTHER REVISING OF SHOPPING LIST, WITH AMERICAN TEAM HELPING TO REFINE IT WITH COMMENTS ON COST, AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY. FINAL LIST, WHICH WE CONSIDER REALISTIC GIVEN GOM PERCEPTIONS AND RESOURCES, ADDRESSES FIRST PRIORITY NEEDS AND TOTALS SOMETHING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF \$40 MILLION. MALAYSIANS WOULD PREFER TO OBTAIN FMS CREDITS FOR THE ENTIRE LIST BUT ARE AWARE THAT THIS IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY. THEREFORE, THEY ARE PREPARED TO PURCHASE SOME OF THESE ITEMS WITH CASH. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD LIKE TO DEFER THOSE DECISIONS UNTIL USG HAS STUDIED THE LIST, FIRMED UP ANY OFFER OF FMS CREDITS AND MADE FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS. IN ADDITION TO M-16'S, MAJOR ITEMS ARE V-150 ARMORED CARS, AND HELICOPTERS. CROWE AND HUGO WILL BE BRINGING DETAILED AND ANNOTATED LIST BACK WITH THEM.

4. FROM BEGINNING, QUESTION OF PROCUREMENT OF M-16'S WAS MAJOR ISSUE. GOM CLEARLY EXPECTED THAT WE WOULD SOMEHOW BE ABLE TO SUPPLY M-16'S IMMEDIATELY. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THEY ARE WITHDRAWING 30,000 HK-33'S WHICH HAVE PROVED UNSATISFACTORY IN COMBAT AND WISH TO PUT M-16'S INTO HANDS OF TROOPS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEY WOULD LIKE TO BUY 41,000 IMMEDIATELY AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS OVER A LONGER TERM FOR THE EVENTUAL PROCUREMENT OF 101,800. TEAM EXPLAINED LIMITATIONS OF AVAILABILITY STEMMING FROM COLT PRODUCTION AND COMPETING DEMANDS (INCLUDING OUR OWN) ON THAT PRODUCTION BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPLETELY MOLLIFY GOM DISAPPOINTMENT. IN AN EFFORT TO EXPEDITE DELIVERY WERE FORTUNATELY ABLE TO TRACK DOWN COLT REP ROB ROY (NOT AN ALIAS) WHO HAD JUST ARRIVED IN K.L. UNEXPECTEDLY AND PUT HIM IN TOUCH IMMEDIATELY WITH GOM. ROY HAS INDICATED TO US THAT COLT COULD BEGIN SUPPLYING REASONABLE MONTHLY NUMBERS OF M-16'S STARTING IN EARLY CALENDAR

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1976. ROY ALSO INDICATED POSSIBILITY THAT COLT MIGHT BE ABLE TO SUPPLY TOKEN AMOUNT THIS FALL, PARTICULARLY IF PROCUREMENT OF LUCRATIVE LONG RANGE CONTRACT INVOLVED. WE HAVE STRONGLY URGED THAT COLT DO THIS. ROY STILL DISCUSSING M-16'S WITH GOM AS THIS IS DRAFTED AND WE WILL OF COURSE BE REPORTING FURTHER ON STATUS OF DEAL.

5. CONSIDERING THE EMPHASIS PLACED ON M-16'S AND IN LIGHT OF REPORTED DISAPPOINTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER RAZAK THAT M-16'S

WHICH GOM PERCEIVES AS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY FOR CONTINUING COMBAT OPERATIONS NOT AVAILABLE OFF THE SHELF, WE RECOMMEND USG TAKE STEPS TO SUPPLY A SMALL NUMBER OF M-16'S IMMEDIATELY. FOR EXAMPLE IF IN SOME FASHION WE COULD DELIVER 1,000 M-16'S IN SEPTEMBER A B ANOTHER 1,000 IN OCTOBER, IT WOULD HAVE A HIGHLY FAVORABLE IMPACT ON THIS GOVERNMENT. CROWE AND HUGO WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS ON THEIR RETURN BUT WE URGE THAT WASHINGTON START ON THIS IMMEDIATELY.

6. DESPITE THESE DISCONNECTS, THE ATMOSPHERE IMPROVED STEADILY AS GOM'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS INCREASED. BY THE CONCLUSION OF THE TALKS, THE GOM SIDE APPEARED TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE REFINED LIST AND TO APPRECIATE THAT WE WERE MAKING A GENUINE EFFORT TO BE RESPONSIVE. THE GOM SEES AN FMS PROGRAM AS ESSENTIALLY STERILE POLITICALLY. WHILE THERE IS NO INTENTION ON ITS PART SIGNIFICANTLY TO ALTER THE PRESENT POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP, IT DOES APPARENTLY CONSIDER THIS AS A FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUING BUT MODEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND LOOKS FORWARD TO INCREASING ITS RELIANCE ON U.S. SOURCES AND SUPPLY. WHETHER WE WISH TO ALTER EVEN SLIGHTLY OUR RELATIONSHIP IN THIS DIRECTION IS A POLICY QUESTION TO WHICH THE USG WILL HAVE TO FACE UP. THIS DECISION SHOULD NOT BE BASED ON ANY EXPECTATION THAT GOM WILL ALTER ITS FUNDAMENTAL FOREIGN POLICY. FURTHERMORE, THE MALAYSIAN PERCEPTION OF THE THREAT AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT MAY DIFFER FROM OUR APPRECIATION OF THE PROBLEM. GIVEN OUR DIFFERENCES IN EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIVE THIS IS INEVITABLE.

DESPITE DIFFERENCE OF VIEW, WE FEEL, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE PRIORITY PACKAGE WHICH THE MALAYSIANS HAVE IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS IS A REASONABLE APPROACH TO THEIR EQUIPMENT DESIRES.

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